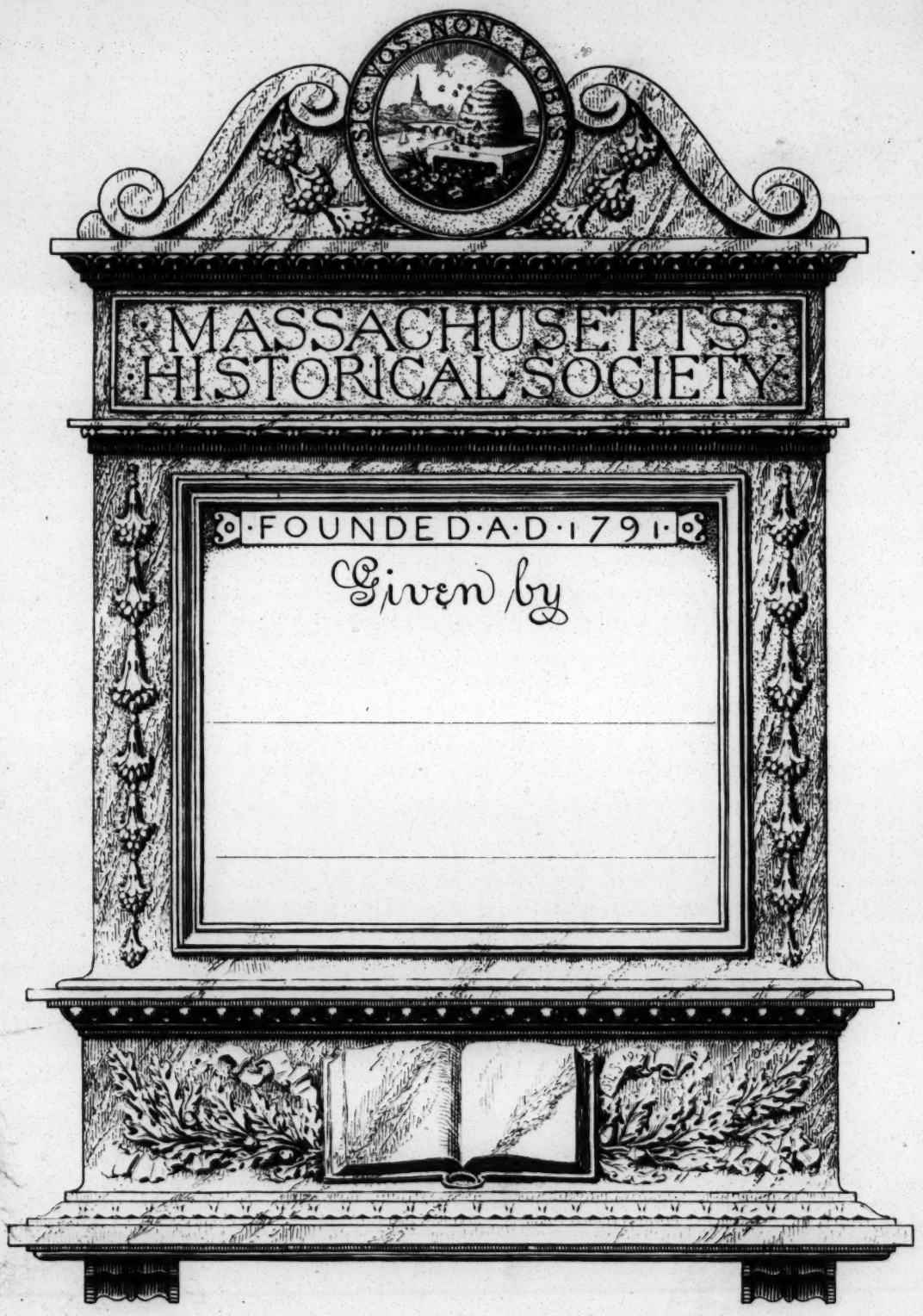
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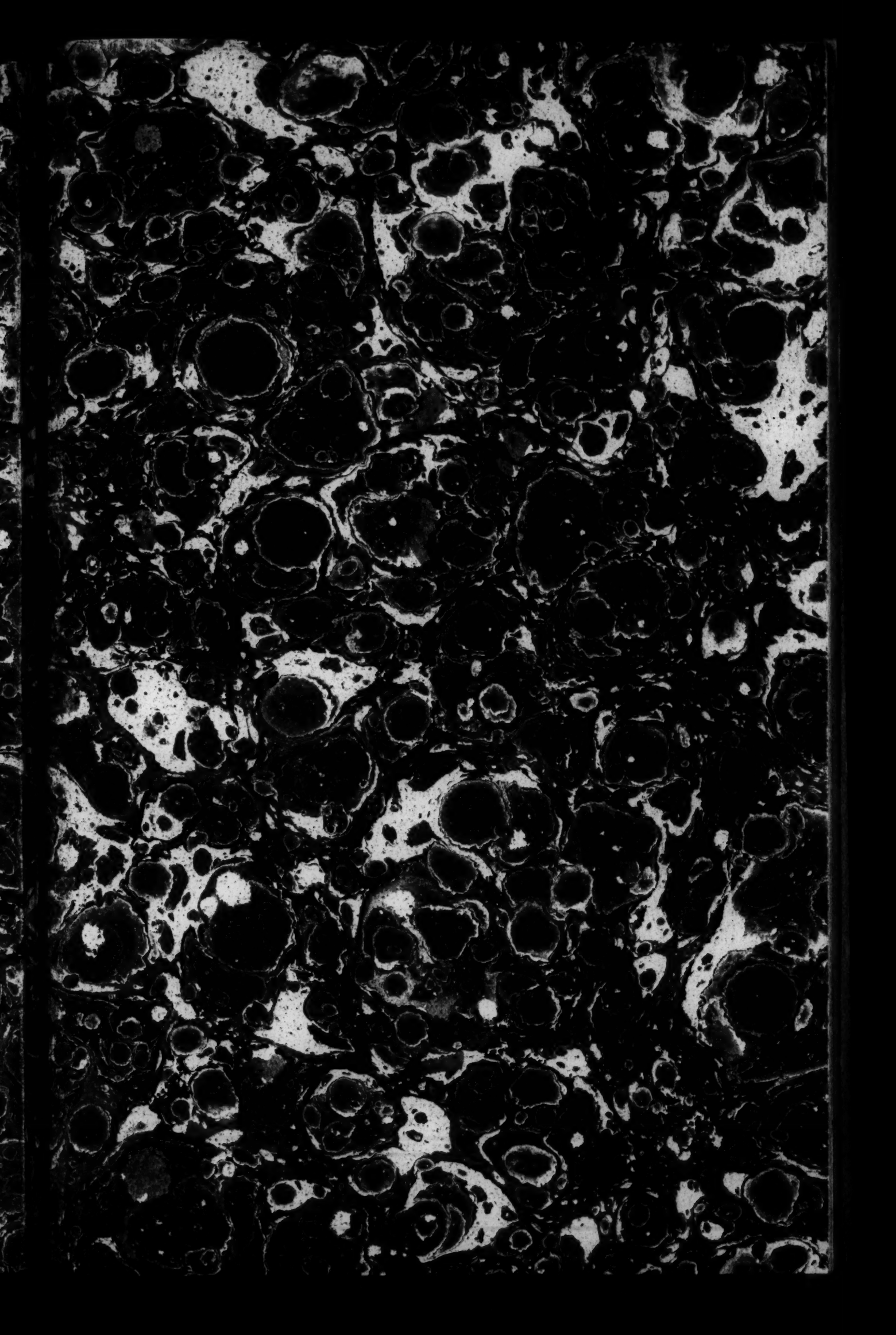

GROSVENOR. BOSTON.

E187 W.L.

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# A Remembrance OF FORMER TIMES FOR THIS Generation; AND Our Degeneracy Lamented.

## The First Part.

Jere. 8. 5. Why then is this People of Jerusalem slidden back, by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

Jere. 3. 12 Go and proclaim these words towards the North, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.

By *W. J.* Esq.

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A

# REMEMBRANCE

Of Former TIMES for this

# Generation.

## The First Part.

*Isaiah V.* 1, 2.

*Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song to my beloved, touching his vineyard: my well-beloved hath a Vineyard in a very fruitful hill.*

2. *And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes; and it brought forth wild grapes.*

I principally scope at the last words..

THis Great Prophet *Isaiah* was one whom God Raised up, and Endowed with a Spirit of Prophecy above most in those days: And as to foretel Christ the Messias coming, and other Accom-

pliſhments, ſo to bear witneſs againſt the woful Degeneracy of thoſe times, that is of Gods own People greatly declined, and wofully degenerated from God and his Wayes, and from the Purity of his Worſhip, wherein their Godly Fore-fathers walked in former dayes; when God planted them a Noble Vine, and was the Glory in the midſt of them; and as a Wall of fire round about them for their defence.

Of whoſe woful degeneracy as the Lord complains by this Prophet; *Chapter* the firſt, *ver.* 2, 3. and *chap.* 3. and other places; ſo he makes the like ſad complaint by that mournful Prophet *Jeremy, chap.* 2. *v.* 1. as you may ſee there; alſo by *Ezekiel* and others of his Prophets. But now to ſtop a little before I proceed; may not the Lord juſtly make the like ſad complaint of the lamentable Degeneracy of his People in theſe Dayes; and that with far greater and more grievous Aggravations thereof than that People were chargeable with; for we eſpecially in *New England* have been brought up under greater and more glorious Light than they. They were trained up under myſterious Types and Shadows, only pointing at Chriſt to come; but we under clear Goſpel Light in the Accompliſhment; *Chriſt manifeſted in the Fleſh, ſeen of Angels, believed on in the world, received up to Glory,* whoſe Second Coming we expect and hope for e're long.

And yet notwithſtanding we have in our firſt times been thus planted a Noble Vine; alas! have

have we not brought forth wild or ſower Grapes, bad fruit, made evil Returns to the Lord after all the great things God has done for us, eſpecially in our Primitive Times.

And whereas in theſe latter dayes God for our Correction and Amendment hath (as we know) viſited and ſmitten us with awful and waſting Judgments from year to year. Yet is it not manifeſt, that we in this, and the Riſing Generation grow worſe and worſe; ſo that God may juſtly plead with us as he did with this People, *Iſa.* 1. 5 *Why ſhould ye be ſmitten any more, you will Revolt more and more*; wherein the Lord (in effect) doth charge them with Incorrigibleneſs, under long continued Corrective Judgments as Ripe or Ripening for Deſolation, which indeed accordingly haſtened upon them; firſt, by the Babyloniſh Seventy Years Captivity, wherein a Remnant was preſerved. And finally by the *Romiſh* Deſolation to this Day.

And truly theſe things conſidered, we have cauſe to fear and tremble to think what God may do with this Sinful and Degenerate Age and Generation wherein we live.

The Lord prepare us.

But to proceed:

Firſt from the whole of the Parable, the *Obſervation* is,

*That when God has planted a Nation or People in their Firſt Times or Infancy, upon good foundations*

*of Goſpel Light and means of Grace, and that under his Divine Protection and Culture, he expects they ſhould bring forth the fruit of all in Piety, Godlineſs, and growth of Religion and Holineſs.*

Obſerv. 2. *That when ſuch a People ſo Planted, do univerſally Degenerate and Backſlide from the Primitive Purity and Godlineſs of their Fore fathers and Anceſtors, and Sin and Iniquity does abound, notwithſtanding Goſpel Light, and Means of Grace ſtill continued to them for their Inſtruction in Religion; and Fatherly Chaſtiſements from God inflicted upon them for their Correction and Amendment, God is highly provoked thereby, and may juſtly complain of them as Unteachable and Incorrigible.*

Obſerv. 3. *That ſuch a People are Ripe or Ripening for Deſolating Judgments, if they do not ſpeedily Repent, Reform and turn to God.*

Of the firſt Obſervation the Summe is, That when God has planted a People in their firſt times on foundations of Religion and Piety, he expects they ſhould bring forth the fruit thereof anſwerably; themſelves, and their Poſterity.

For proof and illuſtration whereof.

1. Some Scriptures. 2. Some Reaſons. 3. Some Application for our Improvement.

1. For proof; not only the Parable it ſelf does clearly infer it, the whole of Gods Planting and Cultivation of that People as his Vineyard doth fully prove it, as I ſhall further demonſtrate when I come to particulars.

But

But this expectation of Fruitfulneſs may be alſo gathered from Iſa. 1. 2. *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, for the Lord hath ſpoken it: I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have Rebelled againſt me.* God calls the Inhabitants of Heaven, the Angels above, and the Inhabitants of the Earth, men below to conſider (as 'twere) of the matter; what he might juſtly expect having ſo nouriſhed and brought up Children: What to Rebel againſt him? to prove Rebellious at laſt; ſure that is an evil return, and both Heaven and Earth will teſtifie againſt ſuch a ſinful and ungrateful People.

Now you that are Parents; if your Children whom you have nouriſhed and well brought up, ſhould prove rebellious againſt you, you would ſurely cry out againſt them, and juſtly too, and greatly lament the diſappointment of your hopes.

Why thus God himſelf does (as you have heard) when his Children or People whom he had nouriſhed and brought up, proved rebellious and Degenerate, as that people did in future Generations. So further, what a ſad complaint the Lord makes againſt this People, *Jer.* 2. 10. *I had planted thee a noble Vine; How then art thou turned into the Degenerate Plant of a ſtrange vine unto me?* Again, *Hoſ.* 11. 7. *My people are bent to Backſliding from me: though they called them to the moſt High, none at all would exalt him.* Again, *Hoſ.* 10. 1. *Iſrael is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himſelf.*

In the next place I ſhall lay down ſome Reaſons why God may expect ſuitable and anſwerable fruitfulneſs from the Vineyard of his Profeſſing People.

And therein firſt, I ſhall refer to Gods Auncient *Iſrael*, to ſhew what great things God did for them, then conſider what God hath done for us in Alluſion thereunto.

1. God did much for that People in the great coſt and pains (as I may ſay) he was at in his Planting and Cultivation of them to make them his Vineyard and fruitful Inheritance.

To which end Firſt, From his Soveraign Grace and free mercy, he ſingled them out, and ſeparated them from the reſt of Mankind loſt in the Firſt *Adam*. Thus he did with *Abraham*, Gen. 15. 1. *I am the Lord that brought thee out of* Ur *of the Chaldees to give thee this Land.* Whereby we ſee the Lord ſeparated *Abraham* from a Heathen People, to lay the foundation of his Church firſt in his Family, and afterwards in his Poſterity; which continued (as we know) to the Coming of the Promiſed Meſſias Jeſus Chriſt, whom they then Rejected, and were therefore Rejected themſelves to this day.

2. God might juſtly expect ſuch fruitfulneſs from that People, from the high Obligation he laid upon them, in giving them his Divine Laws, Statutes and Judgments for their Inſtruction and Education in Grace, and holy Obedience, as 'tis ſaid, *Pſal.* 147. 19, 20. *He ſhewed his word unto Jacob,*

*Jacob, his Statutes and Judgments unto Iſrael; he hath not dealt ſo with any Nation.*

3. God might juſtly expect fruitfulneſs of that his People and Vineyard, in conſideration of the light and means of grace afforded them in his Publick Worſhip and Ordinances for their ſpiritual growth, to ripen them for Eternal Glory.

4. God might juſtly expect ſuch fruitfulneſs of that his People, from his further Cultivation of them by his fatherly Chaſtiſements of them for their recovery and amendment when they ſinned againſt him; and this according to his Covenant Faithfulneſs, as promiſed, Pſal. 89. 30, 31, 32. *If his Children forſake my Law, I will chaſtiſe them*, &c. I ſhall now proceed to make ſome Improvement of what hath been ſaid.

1. With Reflection upon our ſelves in theſe times. 2. For Humiliation. 3. Exhortation.

1. For Information and Reflection.

Hath the Lord in former dayes Planted his People in this Wilderneſs to be his Vineyard: Pray let us ſeriouſly conſider what ſteps he took to bring about that great work, in a very near ſimilitude to what he did for his *Iſrael* of old.

1. He brought them (as we know) out of *Egyptian* Bondage; the ſore Oppreſſion and Perſecution they underwent there, as the Holy Scripture fully declares; ſo 'tis ſaid, Exod. 20. 2. *I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt out of the Houſe of Bondage.* And of this alſo the Lord minds them again, *Deut.* 6. 11, 12.

*When*

*When thou art full then beware leſt thou forget the Lord which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, from the Houſe of Bondage.*

Now may not this be ſaid in a parallel ſenſe of the firſt Generation of our Godly Fathers and Anceſtors. For although God did not bring them out of an *Egyptian* Heathen Land, rather a pleaſant and deſirable Country, yet conſidering the ſore Perſecution of the Saints and Servants of God in theſe times, they might be truly ſaid to be brought out of the houſe of bondage; *Iſrael's* Bondage was outward chiefly; but there's a Conſcience Bondage, and that is the ſoreſt, and that with great & heavy outward Sufferings too.

2. The ſecond ſtep of Divine Power and Providence towards that People of *Iſrael* was, that he led them through the Red-Sea, by his mighty power made a way for them, which elſe had ſtopt and diſcouraged them, as tis ſaid, *Exod.* 15. 19. *the Children of Iſrael went on dry Land through the midſt of the Sea.* Thus the Lord brought his People over the great Atlantick Ocean, (ſaid to be the greateſt in the World) and that with moſt remarkable ſafety in thoſe days; ſo to plant them his Vineyard in this Wilderneſs.

3. The third ſtep of Divine Diſpenſation towards and for that People was, that God did caſt out the Heathen to make room for them, as Pſal, 80. 8. *thou haſt caſt out the Heathen, and planted it*, &c. So the Lord to make room for his People, and for their greater ſafety caſt out the Heathen

Heathen in great numbers, by ſore ſickneſs and mortality in thoſe times; and ſince diminiſht them much by the Sword of War. This was as in the Parable to gather out the Stones for the Planting of his Vineyard.

4. The fourth ſtep of Divine Diſpenſation towards that People, the Lord ſet up a Rich and coſtly and glorious Tabernacle for his Worſhip, according to the Pattern given to *Moſes* in the Mount, with the Ark of the Teſtimony or Covenant; all myſtically and typically pointing at Chriſt their promiſed Meſſias, to build them up, and eſtabliſh them in Religion and Godlineſs; and to prepare them for Entrance and Settlement in that Typical *Canaan*: And thereunto they might not add any Invention of their own, nor alter a pin of that Sanctuary.

So the Lord at firſt planting of his Vineyard in this Land in the days of our Fore-fathers, he Settled Evangelical Churches according to the Pattern in the Mount, *viz.* Chriſt's Inſtitutions given forth by his holy Apoſtles in thoſe Primitive Times of the Goſpel without reſpect to Humane Traditions as the Inventions of men.

5. The fifth ſtep of Divine Diſpenſation towards that People: He gave them Laws and Ordinances, the Moral and Ceremonial Law for their enlightning and inſtruction in the Will of God, and for direction in his Worſhip, to make them fruitful in Holineſs, and to Ripen them for the Spiritual and Eternal Canaan, as 'tis *Neh* 9. 14.

14 *thou madeſt known to them thy Holy Sabbath, and Commandeſt them Statutes and Laws*, &c.

So the Lord was pleaſed to ſettle his Churches in *New-England* in thoſe firſt times with pure Worſhip and Ordinances of his own Inſtitution & Appointment in his Word, to prepare & ripen them for Eternal Life and Glory.

6. The ſixth ſtep: The Lord built a Tower in the midſt of that his Vineyard for their Protection and Defence. And by that we may underſtand the Civil Government ſettled among them by Judges, for preſervation of good Order, Righteouſneſs and Peace, and they qualified according to *Jethro*'s counſel to *Moſes*; men fearing God, men of truth, hating Coveteouſneſs. And was it not thus in our firſt times; the then Rulers were wiſe and godly Worthies of our *Iſrael*, however too ſlightly thought of by too many of this Generation.

7. The ſeventh ſtep of Divine Providence towards Gods Ancient *Iſrael* was with reſpect to their protection and defence againſt their forreign Enemies; for whilſt they continued to be his Glory, God was a Defence to them, as promiſed, *Iſa.* 4. 5. *And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place in Mount Sion, and upon her Aſſemblies, a Cloud and Smoke by day, and the ſhining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the Glory ſhall be a Defence.*

To this purpoſe alſo that promiſe, *Pſal.* 141. 2. *As the Mountains are round about Jeruſalem, ſo the Lord is round about his People from henceforth even*

*for*

*for ever* Alſo *Zech.* 2. 5. And was it not thus with Gods people in *New-England* in our firſt times; was not the Lord as a Wall of Fire round about them, and their Defence againſt all Enemies at home and abroad, ſo that no weapon, council or device proſpered againſt them in thoſe days, as 'tis well known. But alas, alas! has not the Lord comparatively forſaken us in theſe days, and juſtly too, becauſe we have forſaken him.

8. The eighth ſtep obſervable may be with reſpect to Gods Diſpenſations towards that People in after times, For when they began to Degenerate from God and his ways, which was in a gradual manner; God was pleaſed for their Correction and Amendment, gradually to viſit them with Corrections and Chaſtiſments for their Reformation and Recovery. Of this the Lord gave them warning, *Deut.* 31. 16, 17. Read the ſumm: *If they forſake, I will forſake them,* &c. and as 'tis *Pſal.* 89. *viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes.* And thus the Lord did when they degenerated from him, as we may ſee, *Amos* 4. 6. *I gave you cleanneſs of teeth in all your Cities, and want of bread in all your places; yet have you not returned unto me.* v. 9. *I have ſmitten you with blaſtings and mildews, and palmer worms,* &c. *yet have you not returned unto me.* Yea, v. 10. 'tis further ſaid, that God ſent the Peſtilence among them, and the Sword, and Burnings; yet the Lord goes on with the ſame Complaint: Yet have you not Returned unto me,

And

And now pray let us ſolemnly conſider : Is not this our caſe? Hath not the Lord thus awfully diſpenſed towards us for many years paſt, and to this day in a great meaſure? Have we not ſeen and felt many of theſe Judgments of God in this Land ; blaſtings, mildews, worms, ſhortnings of our Bread Corn, Sickneſs, Mortality, Sword, Burnings and the like, though not ſo univerſally as upon that People.

But for all theſe ſore Chaſtiſements, where is our Reformation and Returning to God : May not the Lord make the ſame Complaint againſt us as againſt them : *Yet have you not returned unto me* ; yea and ſay of us as of them, *Iſa* 1. *Hear O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth, I have nouriſhed and brought up a people in* New England, *and they have Rebelled againſt me. I had planted thee,* O New-England, *a noble vine, how art thou then degenerated into the plant of a ſtrange vine unto me?* But to go on with a further account about that People.

9. The Lord ſeeing that inſtead of being Reformed by his Word and Judgments, they grow worſe and worſe, and ſo proved incorrigible; it put him ( as 'twere ) to a ſtand what to do, as we may find in the Parable, *Iſa.* 5. 3, 4. *And now O Inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and men of Judah, judg I pray you betwixt me and my Vineyard; what could have been done more, that I have not done? when I looked it ſhould bring forth Grapes, it brought forth ſower Grapes.*

Now the Lord having thus Expoſtulated with them

them for their unfruitfulneſs under all his Cultivations of them by the means of Grace, having afforded them his divine approbation againſt Enemies. And at laſt viſited them for their degeneracy by his fatherly Chaſtiſements; and they ſtill proving unfruitful and incorrigible notwithſtanding; the Lord being by all put to a ſtand what to do with ſuch a People, reſolves the queſtion himſelf, *v.* 5, 6, 7. that is in ſhort, he would even give them up and lay them waſt (only as we know God had his Elect Ones whom he preſerved even in Babylon) And then in the ſequel of that Chapter, beginning *v* 8. ſo *v.* 11, 18, 20, 21, 22. the Lord denounces woes to them; Wo, Wo, Wo, ſix times ſucceſſively: A ſeries of Woes accompliſht in awful waſting, deſolating Judgments.

And to the ſame purpoſe the Lord threatned them for their Impenitency and Incorrigibleneſs, with ſore and deſolating Judgments by others of his Prophets, as we may ſee in *Amos* 3. And then proceeds to the Execution of them, *chap.* 4. verſe 12. tells them plainly: *Thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael, and becauſe I will do this, prepare to meet thy God O Iſrael.* And then follows a mournful lamentation for them by that Prophet, *chap.* 5. 1,2,3.

In the next place I ſhall further and more particularly Apply and Improve all to our ſelves.

And therefore firſt, Let it be for Examination.

You have heard what Gods Diſpenſations were towards his Ancient *Iſrael* of old; and the evil returns

returns they made, and the ſad and doleful iſſue of all. Let us then ( I ſay ) come home to our ſelves Gods Profeſſing People in this Wilderneſs. O let us ſeriouſly reflect, comparing former dayes with our times.

May not the Lord take up, and juſtly improve this Parable againſt us, as well as againſt them in every ſtep of his Diſpenſations towards us from our very firſt beginning. As in affording us ſuch Goſpel Light, Liberties and Priviledges above any other people in thoſe times; giving us his pure Worſhip & Ordinances, building up his Mount Sion and Jeruſalem in the midſt of us in Evangelical Churches; and therein the platform of his Spiritual Kingdom in our primitive times, beyond what was to be found in all the Earth; all things conſidered.

But I pray let us conſider what fruit have we brought forth to his Glory, good grapes or rather ſower grapes from one end of the Land to the other in theſe times.

If ſo, let it be for a Lamentation.

Ah! how well may the Lord complain of us, as he did of that his Ancient *Iſrael*, Jer. 2. 21. *I had p'anted thee a noble vine, wholly a right ſeed; How then art thou turned into the Degenerate plant of a ſtrange vine unto me?* ſee alſo *ver.* 31, 32.

3. Let the next Improvement be for Humiliation: If ever any people had cauſe to humble themſelves in Sackcloth and Aſhes before the Lord under the ſenſe of their woful Degeneracy, and

and Gods awful wasting Judgments we have been long under, and still are; surely we have.

And to quicken us thereunto, as also, to humble, earnest and fervent prayers and supplication for mercy; see 2 Chron. 7. 14. *If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their Land.* O that it were so indeed with us.

But alas! alas! instead of humbling our selves, which God calls to, and that in Sackcloth and Ashes, as *Isa.* 22. 12. Behold other things, the superabounding of Pride and Vanity, Fantastick Attire and Ornaments, monstrous Head-Towers, and other antick Dresses: And many other God-provoking, and Land-destroying, yea, and Soul-destroying sins which the Lord condemns and threatens, *Isa.* 3. 13, to 24. and many other places.

4. And lastly to conclude all with a word or two for Exhortation and Counsel to this Generation. Seeing our sins and degeneracy have provoked God to follow us so long, and that to this day with woful Judgments, and threaten us further for our incorrigibleness (if we do not repent and turn) even with Desolation.

Let us therefore say in our hearts, and one to another, (and O that it might be so throughout the Land) as the Prophet *Hosea* did in his Exhortation to that people, *Hos.* 6. 1. *Come and let us Return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal*

*us, he hath ſmitten and he will bind us up*, &c. And then he promiſes further, he will Revive us, and we ſhall live in his ſight. Thus ( I ſay ) Let us call one upon another, Come, Come, O Come, Let us return unto the Lord, *&c.*

But you may ſay, How ſhall we Return ?

I anſwer by ſincere and ſerious Humiliation, thorow Reformation, and reſtleſs wreſtling prayer, in the name, and through the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our Advocate and Interceſſor in Heaven : And then we may hope that for his ſake the Lord will make good that gracious promiſe before-mentioned, 2 *Chron.* 14. to hear us from Heaven, forgive our ſins, and heal our Land: And ſo be gracious to the Remnant of his *Joſeph*, as 'tis promiſed, *Amos* 5. 15.

But if we Return not, then we have cauſe to fear thoſe Repeated Woes denounced againſt Gods Ancient *Iſrael* aforeſaid, *Iſa.* 5. &c. will be our ſad portion at laſt.

O therefore let us follow God with prayer, together and apart, That he would have mercy upon his *Iſrael*, the Remnant of his *Joſeph* in this Land, and in other parts of the World in this dark and gloomy Day.

The

## *The Second Part.*

For a further Awakening I ſhall add the Mourners Lamentations for the Sins and Degeneracy of the TIMES: And Gods Awful Judgments long continued and further threatned.

As alſo to ſtir up Chriſtians to deep Humiliation, fervent Prayer, and thorow Reformation.

From the Forty fourth *Pſalm.*

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Exod. 33. 5. *Put off thine Ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do with thee.*

Iſa. 55. 6. *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him whilſt he is near.*

---

Pſalm 44. 23, 24, 25, 26.

*Awake, why ſleepeſt thou, O Lord? ariſe, caſt us not off for ever.*

*Wherefore hideſt thou thy face? and forgetteſt our affliction and our oppreſſion?*

*For our ſoul is bowed down to the duſt: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*

*Ariſe for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies ſake.*

1. IN this Pſalm we have *Davids*, or rather the Churches ſore Affliction and Diſtreſs.

2. The Churches Integrity and good frame of Spirit under all. And

3. Their Prayer in the words Read.

1. We have an account of the Churches diſtreſſed and afflicted State, *v.* 9. to 17. *Thou haſt caſt off, and put us to ſhame: and goeſt not forth with our Armies. Thou makeſt us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us ſpoil for themſelves.* verſ. 11. *Thou haſt given us like ſheep appointed for meat: and haſt ſcattered us among the heathen.* v. 12. *Thou ſelleſt thy people for nought, and doeſt not increaſe thy wealth by their price. Thou makeſt us a reproach to our neighbours, a ſcorn and deriſion to them that are round about us. Thou makeſt us a by word among the heathen: a ſhaking of the head among the people,* &c. And ſo goes on with a ſorrowful complaint of their doleful condition and ſufferings.

Now when it was that this People of God were in, and under ſuch ſad Diſpenſations as if forſaken of God, and caſt off as they complain, is hard to ſay. But probably it was in the time of the Babyloniſh Captivity. But I ſhall leave it.

Only before I proceed, I pray let us ſolemnly and ſeriouſly conſider whether it is not thus with us in a great meaſure in *New England* at leaſt threatned. Have we not cauſe to complain that God in a great meaſure hath (as 'twere) caſt us off and forſaken us. What is the meaning elſe of that great Wrath of God againſt us? in giving up ſo many of our fellow Chriſtians from time to time unto the cruel hands of the Barbarous Heathen, profeſſed Worſhippers of the Devil; ſo letting (as 'twere) Hell looſe againſt us.

If

If we are not ſenſible of it, God will make us ſenſible of it before he has done with us, as he did this people; that we, as they ſhall in like manner mournfully complain before him.

Now the ſad complaint this people here make of their afflicted ſtate, is greatly aggavated in their calling to mind what great things God did for their Fathers in former days, as you may ſee from *v.* 1. to 9. *We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didſt in their days, in the times of old.* v. 2. *How thou didſt drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedſt them; how thou didſt afflict the people, and caſt them out.* v. 3. *For they got not the land in poſſeſſion by their own ſword, neither did their own arm ſave them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, becauſe thou hadſt a favour unto them* And then he goes on with prayer, to make way for the following complaints of their ſorrows and ſufferings, notwithſtanding thoſe great things God had done for their fathers.

And now I pray you, may we not rightly and truly in every particular ſay as theſe do: That we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us, what great things God did do for them in thoſe firſt times, when God planted them as his Vineyard, in his firſt ſettling pure Evangelical Churches in *New-England*; and to that end caſt out the Heathen, at leaſt diminiſht their great numbers; and all this God did by his right hand, and Arm of his power, and the light of his coun-

tenance, becauſe he had a favour unto them, was with them, and their defence and glory in thoſe times. But now as to us their Poſterity and Succeſſors in theſe days: Alas! we may ſadly ſay; *But thou haſt caſt off, and put us to ſhame, and goeſt not forth with our Armies*; and ſo throughout to the end of that Lamentation.

And thus I have mentioned the diſtreſſes of that ancient *Iſrael* of God in thoſe days; as alſo our own ſorrowful State in theſe times parallel therewith, as if it had been pen'd for us in *New-England* as well as for them; and ſo we ought to apply and improve it.

2. In the next place, which is moſt remarkable, we have the Churches gracious frame of Spirit, and Integrity under all theſe diſtreſſes and afflictions they had complained of; ſay they, *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falſely in thy Covenant.* v. 18. *Our heart is not turned back: neither have our ſteps declined from thy way.* v. 19. *Though thou haſt ſore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the ſhadow of death.* And ſee on v. 20, 21, 22.

3. And then that afflicted Church goes on with moſt affectionate argumentative prayer for Gods favour, that he would deliver them for his Mercies ſake, as in the 4 laſt verſes of the Pſalm at firſt mentioned. Although this prayer was the principal thing I had my eye upon, and unto which the many diſtreſſing Diſpenſations of God towards us calls us to, even throughout the Land,

yet

yet I ſhall wave at preſent, and proceed:

Let us then for our ſolemn conſideration, compare the preſent ſtate and condition of the People of God in theſe times, eſpecially our own in this part of the World, with what we find here expreſt concerning that ancient Church and People of *Iſrael* in thoſe days. *viz.*

1. Their afflictions and ſufferings. 2. Their frame of ſpirit and behaviour under all, for our reflection and awakening in theſe ſleepy times.

1. For the ſuffering part, having glanced upon that already, I ſhall not further inſiſt upon it, it being ſo obvious to every ſeeing eye, yea, every ear in all places throughout the Land may hear the doleful complaints that are made of our publick Calamities, fears and diſtreſſes from the Righteous Judgment of God wherewith we have been followed for many years paſt, and ſtill are.

And doubtleſs the memorial of the great things God did for our Fathers and Anceſtors, left upon Record for us, cannot but be a ſore aggravation of our ſins, and juſt ſufferings in theſe declining and degenerate times.

But ſecondly & principally: Let us ſolemnly ſee this peoples gracious frame of ſpirit under all their afflictions and calamities here complained of; and ſee whether it be ſo with us, whether we can truly ſay, and acquit our ſelves before the Lord, and to him as they did: And for our cloſe reflection, we will come to particulars by way of Enquiry.

1. Can we ſay as they do, *v.* 17. *All this is*

*come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.* v. 18. *Our heart is not turned back: neither have our steps declined from thy way,* &c. If we say it is so with us, I may Reply, or rather God may say to us as *Samuel* did to *Saul,* 1 Sam. 15. 14. *What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the Oxen which I hear?*

Let us therefore (I say) more distinctly consider the particulars of the solemn profession this people here make; and they do it to God himself, which is an awful thing.

1. Say they, after all this that is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee. Now pray consider, Can we, or dare we say as they do? That we have not forgotten God in sundry respects; or rather may not the Lord justly say to us as to Backsliding *Israel* of old, *Jer.* 2. 31, 32. *O generation, see ye the word of the Lord: have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, we are Lords, we will come no more unto thee?* v. 32. *Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.* Pray consider whether this forgetfulness of God may not be found among us in this Wilderness in sundry respects? I shall mention some. As

1. Have we not too much forgotten the Design and Ends of our Fore-fathers coming into this Wilderness, *viz.* Religion and Godliness, with the purity of Gods Worship and Ordinances: If we say

ſay we do not forget; then let me ſay, that is an aggravation of our ſin if we be found to purſue another Intereſt, *viz.* the World (for I know, that Religion was the Foundation Intereſt of *New England* in their firſt ſettlement here both in Church and Common wealth. But if the World in a great meaſure has crouded out that, God ſees it, whether we ſee it or not, which was of awful conſideration to this People the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of; ſay they, *v.* 20. *If we have forgotten the Name of our God, or ſtretched out our hands to a ſtrange god:* v. 21. *Shall not God ſearch this out? for he knoweth the ſecrets of the heart.* And therefore may not the Lord lay this Sin of Worldlineſs to *New England*'s Charge, as he did to his degenerate people of old, *Jer.* 6. 13 in the precedent verſes of that Chapter, God had threatned them with ſore Judgments; and that therein he would ſtretch out his hand upon the whole land; and then in *v.* 13. he gives the reaſon of it, *viz.* for from the leaſt of them even to the greateſt of them, every one is given to Coveteouſneſs.

And 'twas for this ſin of Worldlineſs that the Lord was wroth with and ſmote *Ephraim*, Iſa. 57. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth and ſmote him: I hid me, & was wroth, & he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* And 'tis from this root of all evil, as the Apoſtle calls it, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. the love of money; that that gain of Oppreſſion ariſes, which fills the whole land; and for which ſin the Lord threatned to lay his Vineyard waſte,

waſte, as *Iſa.* 5. 6, 7 Read the place. And if we are not as yet a Vineyard laid waſte, aſſuredly we are by preſent and impending Judgments laid open to it, and have cauſe to fear.

2. Again, this afflicted people could ſay, Neither have we dealt falſely in thy Covenant. Now can we ſay ſo too? for we are Gods Covenant people as they were. Our Fathers in their firſt ſettling of Churches in *New-England*, did Covenant with God for themſelves and their ſeed and Poſterity, to walk with God, and to uphold his Worſhip and Ordinances according to his revealed will in Goſpel Inſtitutions, without mixture of their own, or addition of Humane Inventions: And to maintain Communion of Saints in Church State, in purity and holineſs, looking well to the entring in, and going forth of the Sanctuary; according to that charge, *Ezek.* 44. 5. The neglect whereof in bringing in the uncircumciſed in heart and fleſh, the Lord does charge as breach of his Covenant on that people. Now this was the holy care of our Fore fathers in their time as 'tis well known. But have, and do we follow their Example? if ſo, What is the meaning of the manifeſt degeneracy of this Generation? very evident, if we compare Churches and Church members (many of them) and ſome of our now Adminiſtrations in practice and Diſcipline, with the way, practice and Diſcipline of Churches in thoſe firſt times. Let the Rules of the Goſpel left by Chriſt and his holy Apoſtles, (being the unalterable

ble Laws of his Spiritual Kingdom) determine and resolve the case; for all must be tryed and judged by those Divine Laws and Rules in the Great Day. But I desire rather to mourn in secret for these things, than to mention particulars, because I would not offend; yet let me say, that then at first the Churches were the Glory of Christ, and upon all the glory there was a defence, as promised, *Isa.* 4. 5, 6. And further, (I pray seriously mind it, and know, that according to the purity of Churches, hath been, and will be their Protection. But when once by their degeneracy they become as the outward Court-Worshippers (which some in these times incline to) they shall then be given to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles (witness the once famous seven Churches of *Asia*) And if that in part be the condition of some Churches in this Land at this day, to be in danger of being destroyed by Antichristian and Heathen Enemies, we may apprehend the cause, and may well fear God has a Controversy even with his Churches, as well as the whole Body of this People.

3. In the next place, can we say with this people: *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.* O that was a great thing! whilst their heart kept right with God, they kept close to him in other things; but when that turned back from God, then they declined apace, and that in every thing. Now can we in these times say thus; Alas, alas! our wound lyes here; this

O this is the ground of the Apoſtacy of this age, of the degneracy of *New England* in this Generation; our hearts are gone, and turned back from God, and from one another, as Chriſt has foretold of the laſt times. And hence it is that our ſteps are declined from his ways; the firſt & beſt ways of the Churches of Chriſt, and of our godly forefathers in our primitive times. Let me explain and evince this in ſome par iculars.

1. Do not our hearts go ſeveral ways herein; ſo this people had but one heart (as 'twere) among them all; for they do not ſay our hearts, but our heart is not turned back. So in the Primitive Times of the Goſpel 'tis ſaid *Act.*2.4. there was ſingleneſs of heart, or one heart among them. And ſo it might be ſaid of our Firſt *New-England* Churches. But now alas! it may be ſaid of us, as the Lord complains of *Iſrael*, *Hoſ.* 10. 1, 2. *Their heart is divided, now ſhall they be found faulty.*

O I could ſay much of the ſorrowful conſequents of this heart diviſion among Gods profeſſing people, when they began to decline in the other *England*, and that in my own time, and obſervation there, which proved a ſad in-let to their after changes and ſuffering in many reſpects.

2. Again, Have we not left or loſt our firſt love upon a Spiritual account. This the Lord Jeſus charges upon that ſhining Church of *Epheſus*, which out ſhined moſt of the Churches in our times, as you may ſee, *Rev.* 2. 1, 2, 3. And yet charged with this loſs of firſt love; and therefore threatned

threatned to be Unchurched, if they Repented not; see *verse* 4, 5.

Now if it be found that we have left our first love to God, and one to another, and to the good ways of God our fore-fathers walked in. How far this threatning & sentence may concern us, I shall leave to solemn consideration: And say no more.

3. Are we not in this Generation (at least too many) grown more lax, and large in our principles, yea and in practice also, then in the first times, and that in sundry respects. Indifferent about the things of God, if not lukewarm; the Evils charged upon the Churches of *Laodicea* and *Sardis*, as *Rev.* 3. 2, 3 and 15, 16.

Ah! how indifferent are most Christians in these times; can too easily give way to, and comply with new principles and practices in the things of God, without clear Scripture warrant. And what a lukewarm frame of Spirit as to Religion, may be found almost every where, so that we may fear the life & power of Religion will wither & dye away by degrees, if Christ revive it not.

For Lastly, Have we not in these times in a great measure lost the power of Godliness both in heart and life; if so, 'tis no wonder that our steps are declined from his ways, for if heart godliness be gone, life godliness will quickly follow. Hence the Lord laid that Charge of old upon *Abraham*, Gen. 17. 1. *I am God Almighty or Alsufficient, walk before me, and be thou upright.* When once we grow in heart slight and formal in our Communion and walking with God, we shall quickly grow slight in other respects: If we loose the life and power of godliness in our hearts, we shall lose it also in our lives; and of and against this we are solemnly warned in these latter days we are fallen into, 2 *Tim.* 3. 1, 5. pray read the Text. We have cause greatly to mourn to see the Accomplishment of what the Holy Apostle there foretells in

so

ſo great a meaſure: The Lord help us to fear our ſelves, & to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation; and ſo be carried away with the iniquity of the times.

Having thus ſpoken to the principal matters contained in this Pſalm, in reference to the times we live in, for our reflection and awakening: That we may be ſtirred up to prepare to meet the Lord in the way of his Judgment, for he is ſurely come forth out of his place, to puniſh the Inhabitants of the Earth for their iniquity. I ſhall therefore draw towards a concluſion; and only a few words further for Improvement of the whole.

1. Then if we have been long, and ſtill are an afflicted people in this Land, and cannot but ſay, unleſs we are aſleep, or worſe, penally hardened, as 'tis *Iſa.* 9. 12. *For all this his Anger is not turned away, but his hand is ſtretched out ſtill.* Then I ſay, let us humbly juſtify God in all, and judge our ſelves for this, ſee *Neh.* 9. 33. *Thou art juſt in all that is come upon us, for thou haſt done right but we have done wickedly*; and *Ezra.* 9. 13. *And after all this that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great treſpaſſes, ſeeing that thou our God haſt puniſht us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve.*

And ſurely great cauſe we have thus alſo to Juſtify God in the many woful, waſting, long continued and annually ſtill increaſing Judgments he hath followed us with to this day, conſidering that our Degeneracy from the firſt and beſt ways of his Covenant people in our primitive times, goes on and increaſeth; and that Pride, Oppreſſion and Profaneſs (too much connived at) ſeems to abound more and more, in all or moſt parts of the Land, as if we were already ripe, or ripening apace for an overflowing Scourge, or utter deſolation, which the Lord in mercy prevent.

And yet though the by-paſt, preſent and further threatned Judgments of God are very terrible, I am more afraid

ſraid of that word from God which he denounced againſt *Ephraim* of old, Hoſ. 4. 17. *Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone.* That degree of reſolvedneſs in Degeneracy does ſo manifeſtly appear among us, that I fear and tremble, leſt the Lord ſhould ſay of us, Let them alone. O for a people, or particular Soul to be let alone in their Sin, is a moſt dreadful thing, the ſoreſt of Judgments, as we find it expreſt, Pſal. 81. 11, 12. *My People would not hearken to my voice,* &c. They would not hearken to his voice, ſpeaking to them by his Prophets, by his Word, and by his Judgments. God had been long ſpeaking to them in all theſe ways, but ſtill they would not hearken; and then follows: *So I gave them up to their own hearts luſts, and they walked in their own counſels.*

And then verſe 13. follows a ſad Lamentation for them; God himſelf laments their caſe. *O that my People had hearkened unto me, and Iſrael had walked in my ways.* verſe 14. *I ſhould ſoon have ſubdued their enemies, and turned my hand againſt their Adverſaries.*

Now may not the Lord thus Lament over his Profeſſing People in *New-England*; yea, and well he may. For ſurely had we hearkened to the Lords ſo long ſpeaking to us by the Miniſtry of his Word, and by his Judgments, and walked in his ways accordingly, after the good Example of our Godly Fore-fathers; and adhered to the good Scriptural Foundations then laid in Church and Common-wealth; the Lord would ſoon have ſubdued our Enemies, that are ſuch a ſore Scourge to us from year to year, and preſerved us as he would have preſerved that his Ancient *Iſrael* in thoſe dayes, and not ſo follow (beſides the preſent War) with ſuch yearly waſting, Impoveriſhing and Famine threatning Judgments to this day.

I ſhall conclude all with a word of Exhortation.

Inſtead then of Complaining and Diſcontent, whatever publick or perſonal Calamities and Afflictions we are under, Let us ſay with *Jeremy*, Lam. 3. 22. *It is of the Lords Mercy we are not conſumed, becauſe his Compaſſions fail not*: and with *Job*, *chap.* 9. 15. *make our Supplication to our Judge.* And in ſo doing, as he, *chap.* 23. 4. fill our mouths with Arguments: That is, Let us night and day, together and apart, follow God with humble, penitent, affectionate, fervent and earneſt Prayers, and Cries in the Name, and through the Mediation of JESUS CHRIST our Advocate and Meritorious Intercedor in Heaven, as this afflicted Church and People of God did in thoſe diſtreſſing times, wherein we have their holy Example in the words firſt penned. And wherewith for our Direction, as ſuiting our own ſorrowful times, I ſhall conclude.

Pſal. 44 23, 24, 25, 26

*Awake, why ſleepeſt thou, O Lord, caſt us not off for ever?*

*Wherefore hideſt thou thy face, and forgetteſt our Affliction and our Oppreſſion.*

*For our Soul is bowed down to the Duſt, our belly cleaveth unto the Earth.*

*Ariſe for our help and Redeem us for thy Mercies Sake.* Amen.

# FINIS.

From 29.15

Bd. Sept. 1936